

Using multiple browser windows in Internet Explorer 8:

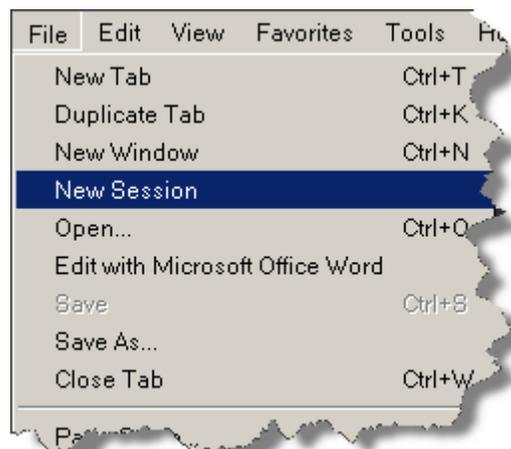
Some WFDSS users open more than one browser window (or tab) when working with their incidents and analyses. While this can be a good timesaving/quick-reference trick, there have always been risks associated with doing this (especially when working with multiple incidents or analyses). Understanding how browsers refresh and share (or don't share) session information can be confusing, and with Internet Explorer 8 (IE8), the probability that you will experience 'odd behavior' and failures is even more pronounced.

When two windows (or tabs) are open in IE8, they share the same WFDSS 'session' information. This is particularly obvious if you try to view two different incidents or analyses in the same session.

Let's say you open the Smokey Bear Incident in one window and the Woodsy Owl Incident in another window. If you work on the Smokey Incident for a while and then go back to the Woodsy Incident, you find that Woodsy has magically 'turned into' Smokey. This is an obvious annoyance from a viewing perspective, but the problems really arise when you begin to enter data between different tabs and windows in the same session. It would be very easy, for example, to start making changes to what you think is the Woodsy Owl Incident only to realize later that you, unknowingly, had been editing the Smokey Bear Incident all along.

IE8 gives you the option to open a new session (one that does not share session cookies with other open browser windows). You can think of it as an entirely separate, stand-alone browser that has no connection to the other window. A new session should be created anytime that you want to view different incidents or analyses simultaneously.

To create a new session, go to **File/New Session** in the IE8 menu (see screen capture below):



A new IE8 window opens under a new session.



Because this is a new session, you must open WFSS from the new window, log-in to Production or Training, and then navigate to the incident or analysis that you are interested in viewing.

This second session can be used to view the same incident or analysis or a different one. Though this takes a few more seconds than opening a new window in the same session, it will alleviate the problems associated with session merging between two different analyses or incidents.

One final caution for those using two windows (or sessions) on one incident or analysis:

Even when you are working on just one incident or analysis, problems are likely to occur when using multiple windows or tabs. Within WFSS, it is often imperative that changes occur in the proper order and, when multiple windows are open, you should understand that one window does not necessarily know what has been changed in the other window (even in the same session). At best, this may generate some failure warnings. At worst, the information that you intend to change might not be added, changed, or deleted in the manner that you intended.

It is best to use one browser window per incident or analysis (and to always open different incidents or analyses in a new session). If you must open another window for the same incident or analysis (to keep a map up for example), designate one window as the 'data entry' window and maintain the other as a 'viewer only' window. The 'viewer only' window might need to be refreshed to see new changes that were made from the 'data entry' window, but no edits should ever be made in the viewer window. Last, because it is not unlikely that you may switch to another analysis in the second window, it would be best to open the 'viewer' in a new session.

A 'test page' to explore sessions, tabs, and new windows:

To understand sessions, explore the following link. Open this link with IE8 in new tabs and windows, and also in a new session. If you change the background color in one tab or window, it will change in all tabs and windows. If you change it in a new session, it will not change in the other session.

<http://www.enhanceie.com/test/sessions/>

This 'simple test page' was created by Eric Lawrence and posted at [this website](#).